

Wood Ditton Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers
summarised by

Mike Petty



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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News. They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library together with have detailed cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check. There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

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1899 07 12

Wood Ditton husband, p3

1899 09 14

A young lady, governess at Wood Ditton rectory went to bed feeling unwell recently and remained in a trance for 10 hours, notwithstanding efforts to arouse her. The doctor was sent for but his efforts proved unavailing during that day. Ultimately she was awakened by douches of cold water.

1899 09 14

Considerable interest having been aroused by particulars of the trance at Wood Ditton a representative of the C.D.N. made further inquiries. After the young lady had lain for 40 hours the doctors decided to try the effect of sudden shocks. She was taken from bed and placed across some chairs over a bath. So rigid was her body that nothing was required to support the space between the chairs. A large can of ice-cold water was procured and one of the doctors, standing on a chair, directed a stream of water on to her face. The douches of water continued until she had apparently been fully aroused.

1905 04 26

Wood Ditton ducks, p4

1905 05 09

A grocer and baker from Saxon Street, Wood Ditton, told the bankruptcy court that he took over the business from his mother as a going concern in 1902. He afterwards discovered that whilst the stock-in-trade, utensils and fixtures were worth only £30 the liabilities amounted to nearly £200. He obviously had been insolvent from the time he commenced business. Now heavy accounts were becoming due which he could not meet, so he filed for bankruptcy 05 05 09

1905 10 11

Wood Ditton butcher suicide, p3

1906 07 11

Serjt Mobbs told magistrates he saw Ben Scrivener, an engine driver from Wood Ditton, driving a locomotive with two trucks attached in High Street, Newmarket. The funnel was emitting a great deal of smoke, filling the street. He followed it to the cemetery. The driver said he had a good load and was going uphill. He made no more smoke that he was obliged. He was fined one shilling. 06 07 11

1907 12 17

Hauxton School should be closed to children who have passed the third standard and they must attend Shelford or Harston schools, the Education authority decided in the interests of economy. But parents objected and eight were summoned for not sending their children to school. It meant a walk of a mile-and-a-half, they would get wet and sit in wet things all day as there was no chance of drying them. But the entire school population of Wood Ditton, Croxton and Eltisley had to walk that distance. - 07 12 17 & a

1909 07 02

Wood Ditton Pig & Whistle publican drowned – 09 07 02

1913 01 31

Band of Hope Union annual meeting head that David Moore ('Uncle David') had given 78 addresses and 75 lantern lectures which had been attended by 5,198 adults and 10,865 children. The lantern shows had been very popular and were an excellent method for giving effective teaching in a pleasant way. Numerous visits had been paid to villages and Wood Ditton, Cheveley, Dulling and Soham Fen had joined the Union. Numerous pledges to abstain from drinking had been given. 13 01 31 p9 CIPof

1914 02 06

Wedding of a Famous Pigeon Shot. The marriage was very quietly solemnised on Tuesday morning at the Parish Church, Wood Ditton, of Mr. Elijah Moore, the well-known racing commission agent, and a famous pigeon shot, of Dullingham, to Miss Florence Day, a daughter of Mr. F. W. Day, who retired a year or two ago as a trainer of racehorses. The bride was given away by her brother, Mr. Reginald Day, trainer. After the ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Moore left in the bridegroom's motor car for Cambridge, en route for Monte Carlo. 14 02 06

1914 06 12

Wood Ditton hospital parade, 1914 06 12 p5

1914 10 09

Uniform and boots for the soldiers based at Melbourne Place School are expected to arrive shortly. Meanwhile they are wearing their civilian attire but have been issued with shirts and socks. The men seem happy and well-pleased with their lot. One farm labourer from Wood Ditton says "I'm better off now than I ever was. My guv'nor's payi8ng me seven shillings a week and I'm getting seven bob here and board and lodgings and clothes". He was contemplating marriage before the call to arms came but he and his sweetheart have patriotically agreed to wait until the war is over. Let us hope their happiness may not long be deferred.

1916 08 16

Stack Fire. On Saturday, shortly before 8 a.m., a haystack, the produce of 30 acres, on Mr. H. Gardner's premises, Church Hall, Wood Ditton, was found to be on fire. Mr. Gardner, with all the assistance that could be mustered, set to work at once to prevent the flames spreading to adjoining stacks and this effort was happily successful. The Newmarket Rural District Fire Brigade (under Foreman R. Forrester) arrived in good time, and succeeded in extinguishing the flames, but practically the whole of the stack was destroyed or rendered useless. The cause of the fire was overheating. Supt. Winter and the local constables attended. 16 08 16

1920 01 07

Rats Killed, Up to December 3rd last the number of rats killed in the county and paid for by Cambs County Council under the Rats Order, was 35,516. The districts concerned were: Little Abington (number of rats killed 504), Ashley (980), Balsham (2,718), Borough Green (358), Bottisham (999), Cheveley (631). Chippenham (838), Great Chishill (322), Croxton (225), Dullingham (1,205), Duxford (754), Elsworth (39), Fordham (8,072), Fowlmere (489), Harston (322), Hauxton (186). Heydon (1,593), Hildersham (236). Horseheath (324), Ickleton (1,095), Isleham (3,809), Kennett (1,422). Kirtling (396), Kneesworth (549), Linton (584), Lode (548), Melbourn (442), Newton (160), Pampisford (429), Sawston (332), Shepreth (313). Shudy Camps (1.38), Snailwell (786), Soham (2,896), Stetchworth (1,105) Swaffham Prior (1,032), Thriplow (464), Waterbeach (967), West Wickham (995), Whittlesford (324), Great Wilbraham (846), Wood Ditton (2,017).

1934 09 12

A quantity of earth has fallen from the sides of the Kirtling parish well and filled it up to above water level. Messrs Lack of Cottenham say cleaning it out and making good the brickwork was very dangerous and they were not prepared to undertake the work. They suggested a new borehole we sunk. A 200 gallon water cart has been hired from Pamplin Bros to distribute water from the main at Wood Ditton at a cost of one penny a pail full. 34 09 12

1941 04 18

London Comes to Cheveley.—"The Rectory in the village of Cheveley (Cambs.) must be among the handsomest property now used by Friends." So states a note (says Watchman) in a recent "News" sheet issue by the Society of Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee, which announces that towards the close of last month this rectory was occupied by mothers and children from Stepney and Limehouse. These folk were selected from East End shelters in which the Friends work. Most of the

women had been to the country before — they returned because they could not stand living in other people's houses and the separation from their London friends. And they have come to Cheveley because they had been allowed to take some of their own essential furniture with them and live in a community of their London neighbours. To help them to make up their minds about coming, a film of Cheveley was made and shown in the shelters—which strikes me as being extremely accommodating, to say the least. "The scheme," says the 'News' note "would never have come into operation without the advice, help and encouragement of a Cheveley resident. Mrs Morriss, whose horse won the Derby a few years ago." There is, I believe, a similar 'Friends' centre at Wood Ditton for bombed-out people.

1942 10 15

Wood Ditton fire four thatched cottages – 42 10 15

1948 09 09

Albert Barrett, about 63, of Newmarket, a licensed pedlar and well known in the town as "Ackie Barrett", the Old Moore's Almanac man, died in White Lodge Hospital following an accident at the Wood Ditton level crossing. For many years, Barrett, a familiar figure in his shining black gaiters, was also an ice cream vendor

1949 08 25

When you run over a policeman's toes with your bicycle, he is liable to take more than a passing interest in the way you ride your machine... and to become downright concerned if, as you dismount, he notices that your walk is unsteady! PC Ridd of Moulton followed that theory exactly when a Wood Ditton man ran over his toes in Newmarket high street. The man had difficulty in parking his bicycle by the kerb and was unsteady in his walk. A passer-by offered to take him to the police station in his car, but on the way the man struggled and put his arm through one of the celluloid windows. Fined £1 for being drunk in charge of a bicycle

1950 03 03

Since fire service tenders have been maintaining a supply of water to five Cambridgeshire villages after a break-down at one of Newmarket RDC's pumping stations. It was found that only 4,500 gallons were available at the station which has a normal output of 30,000 gallons per day. The fire service instituted a shuttle service between the pumping station and a hydrant in Newmarket. The villages affected are Ashley, Cheveley, Wood Ditton, Kirtling and Saxon Street. The council has just received approval for at £82,000 water scheme which they have been pressing for some time

1951 07 26

Purchase of the Cottenham police house in the High Street and adjoining land for £1,350 was recommended; if a new house is erected in Telegraph Street the existing police house may be sold. Messrs H. Edwards tendered £5,650, for the erection of two houses at Newmarket Road, Wood Ditton in place of another which had been previously approved. Tributes were paid for the courtesy and kindness of all ranks of the police towards the travelling public attending the Royal Show.

1956 11 27

Two sections of army cadets searched an area of land near Wood Ditton for enemy outposts. These proved to be numerous and several attacks were carried out before the troops, accompanied by cadets from the Newmarket platoon, who had acted as the enemy, returned to their billets at Ditton Green to clean their weapons. Despite the cold weather and being covered in mud from head to foot, they all agreed it was a wonderful weekend. 56 11 27b

1960

The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings from this date

1961 08 11

Cambridge Independent Press photo feature on Wood Ditton & Saxon Street – 61 08 11 CIP

1964 09 18

The country parsonage is changing. Once it was a sombre, imposing residence in spacious grounds. Now it is a dignified, modern house in more modest surroundings with central heating. A clergyman was an important figure in a village community, ranking with the squire. Now he is less well off than his neighbours. So the Diocese is building new homes and many a parson's lot has been improved. Six were completed in 1962, including at Wood Ditton and Lt Shelford. Now one at Dry Drayton is about to be occupied 64 09 18bb

1976 03 17

Cambridge pubs and beer gardens teem with tourists on hot summer nights – until shortly after 10.30 pm when local licensing laws decree that pub life must come to a sudden stop. But, as holidaymakers climb into their guest house beds, the evening's revelries are still in full swing in Wicken, Snailwell and Wood Ditton, not exactly cosmopolitan centres of jet-setting sophistication but villages allowed by local licensing laws to stay open until 11 pm from Monday to Saturday

1976 03 19

Six primary schools in Cambridgeshire villages may have to close next year. Schools at Wood Ditton, Kirtling, Chippenham, Horseheath, Quy and Madingley have been shortlisted from a number of schools with less than 75 pupils which the county council feels may no longer be viable for educational or economic reasons. Other schools with few pupils include Ashley (30 pupils), Black Horse Drove (40), Castle Camps (55), Dullingham (30) and Stuntney (40)

1976 12 01

Parents with children at several small village schools have lost their fight to stop them from being closed when Cambridgeshire County Council backed closure because they are no longer a viable proposition. The schools are at Madingley, Ashley, Kirtling, Chippenham, Wood Ditton, Hemingford Abbots and Coldham near Wisbech. Some have fewer than 30 pupils and are housed in outdated buildings. Councillor Margaret Shaw said "Village schools are the heart of our county". But hard decisions must be taken in times of financial difficulty. The Council also agreed that more than 70 places it provides at the Perse and Kimbolton schools should in future be 'assisted' and not free

1978 06 12

About 800 of the country's small rural schools have vanished in the past 10 years. Financially county councils claim there are not viable. But in Cambridgeshire four small villages have had a scheme approved which they hope will save their schools. Ashley, Cheveley, Wood Ditton and Kirtling have formed a Schools Federation, creating one school from four, but without the loss of any. Each will be maintained under one administration, rather than four, cutting costs and increasing the scope for improved facilities and a broader education. There will be one headmaster and six assistant teachers and a larger range of reading books which will float between the schools.

1980 05 13

A 90-year-old family tradition has been broken with the retirement of Wood Ditton landlord Mr Jack Holland. It was in the 1890s that his grandfather first took over the tenancy of the Three Blackbirds. He was succeeded by his daughter Edith and her husband Laurie Holland. Then in 1958, when his mother retired, Jack and his wife Alice took over. But now the brewery, Tolly Cobbold, has turned down his son Kenneth in favour of a different landlord. Ken, an electrician, is not too disappointed; he had simply wanted to keep the pub in the family. 80 05 13c

1980 10 03

Should you walk into the Three Blackbirds at Wood Ditton in the early hours of the evening you will be greeted not by the sounds of a juke box but by the strains of Bach, Beethoven and sometimes Elgar. For the landlord, Patrick Thompson, is learning to play the violin and has joined evening classes to create his own instrument 80 10 03d

1980 11 14

The black sheep of Wood Ditton – Mark Jeffery transported to Australia in 1850s – 80 11 14